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Cocke: I thought we can let this wander a little bit, but what I thought would be useful for people who might read this either in an archive or excerpt form is ... put it this way, what's a nice policeman like you doing in a project like this?

Wilson: I think it's—most people that know me tell me I defy what they see as a policeman, usually you can read them when you see them. And I think I just... Let's take it back to Greatest American Festival thing started and I've got a strong relationship with a couple of events and it's dual reasons, when I worked with them coordinating security for the events, but, too, I was a season ticket holder to the Broadway series and whatever other events were going on. I just... I enjoy the arts and I've always enjoyed the arts as an outlet of recreation and that was one of my electives in college, were the performing arts classes because it got me out of the political science mode and it was therapeutic. I've always enjoyed that aspect of looking at things and using it as a diversion and are a means of expression. So when this came up, the American Festival, Colleen asked me if I would represent DPS in exploring what it was about and I said, "Sure." And I didn't know where it was going or what the concept was and we started doing the story circles and I saw... I imagined the possibilities. Especially given our unique circumstances—our culture. We're very encumbered. We've got that dichotomy of... We're a very closed culture and [inaudible] people [inaudible], but then I never handled say—these people don't know what we're going through, they don't understand. We set ourselves up for that. This offer, I think a non-threatening way of exposing those feelings without a threat of opening your doors and saying this is who you are. Police just don't have that mentality. The military doesn't have that mentality, it's just very—we're close because of who we are in relation to each other and so to penetrate that is very difficult. But this offer is a way of getting the... Getting at least the one-way communication going of here's how we feel about things. Here's how things affect us. It seemed like a natural

outlet for that because officers always get that in return. We're always second guessed in the media—in a one-way communication. We're always given sensitivity training with the assumption that we're being transitioned from Neanderthal, racist, fascist—the given. Here's the given now here's how you should think. And that's how I coach this. That's the way I coach it to these guys. I say, "This is reverse sensitivity training." We get to give them back and what it's like to be on this side of the fence. And I think those assumptions that they're making about us either aren't valid or what they're saying is a result of the way we have to do business. The style we take and then maybe de-escalate off of it, but in some ways that's how we go home at night because we haven't made ourselves let our guard down to be a victim. When they come inside, one of the interesting things in that regard, we do a lot of training and we do go out and do high risk stop training. And that's where you get some people to get in the car and play the bad guys and you roll up on them, you write them up, you get them out of the car and the assumption is they've just robbed a bank or Circle K or whatever. We know that somebody's going to get hurt if it's not handled tactically. And we invited one of the professors out, he's a chair of the Public Safety Advisory Committee and we invited him out to come out and observe and we said, "Why don't you be a bad guy?" So he was a passenger in the car and they—what they do is up to them. We give them little guns and Derringer's and knives or whatever else and they can conceal them or hide them or do whatever they want. We went on with this scenario where we stop the car, there's two or three of them in the car, we get them out of the car, comb them out, get them handcuffed and searched and put them in our cars. And what was interesting was when we were done, he said, "You know, now I understand why you do what you do." And he said, "As I was there being the bad guy and I was searching for opportunities--." He said, "As safe as you guys were and as authoritative as you were, there were still opportunities, and if I wanted to do something, I probably could have." There's no way you can explain that to someone. You can't—in the Sunday paper, the read is going to be *Four Officers Open Fire Simultaneously and Suspect was [inaudible-tape skips] 36 Times or Students Thrown Down on the Ground and Why Were the Police So Excessive*, and this and that. There's no way we can encapsulate why we do what we do, unless you're in those shoes. And he was in the shoes of the bad guy and that's when he really saws that if I want to

hurt these guys, I can hurt them. That accounts for a lot of that image, the Ray Ban's and the body language and the directness because that's how we go home at night. Once you find out what you're dealing with, you can de-escalate and become a little more approachable and there are situations when you don't need the façade, where you're coaching people because they're not a suspect, they're a victim or they're just somebody that needs some help. That's where I think this project comes in handy is the officers get to show what's behind that façade and what they're thinking, what they're feeling, both in a practical sense and then in a human sense of the aftermath. There's a lot of... We deal with everything clinically. It's like going to an autopsy. You go and do an autopsy and it's clinical. When you see that saw running through that skull, you have to concentrate on well, we're interested to see what's in them—are there aneurysms or that type of thing or what are we going to find out from this rather than say, this is a 19 year-old kid that committed suicide for some reason. So while we're at work, you have that clinical mind-set and when you talk to each other there's like dull humor of trying to deal with the issues. But later on it kind of sinks in and it runs a gambit of, "Man, I could have been killed" to "What a waste." So, that's what I find compelling about the project is that it's an opportunity to get the officers' perspective of those situations to a public that only sees it in the Sunday paper, or only sees it on TV or has only seen it when they got that ticket from that nasty motorcycle officer. And to virtualize that—to see where we can go with that, that's why I got involved. It feeds both ends for me. It's that left hemisphere and that right hemisphere working on both cylinders that's—because I've got the work related and I've got—I can deal with it through the artistic end and try to put it together and that's what I find really gratifying is the thought of making it—meshing at those two that are usually irreconcilable areas.

Cocke: What are like things to say a little bit about what your at least beginning concept is for, the piece you're going to make—you're going to write?

Wilson: Well, as we discussed it [inaudible] during one of our discussions, we talked about how lives intersect at some point. And that's... As I kind of gestated that and mulled it over and thought of some of the stories and they literally take place at

intersections but they are all figuratively at an intersection and we all go into an intersection not knowing [inaudible phrase] others [inaudible]. You can only... The visibility down that road it's not—it's finite, and so the baggage that that person came with, you're not really privy to. And the people we're dealing with have no clue where we came from down that road. And so that's the concept I have, is the stories being played out literally and figuratively at intersections and getting kind of snapshots of activity or of stories or of issues or feelings. Let this kind of shoot out and plant seeds or make white folks go off, and give a context to what is otherwise never in context. What people see when they drive by in an accident scene or what people feel when they're inconvenienced by police officers or what they read in the paper is never in context. It's always the snapshot that they have and then assigning their values to it or their... They're distilling it through their own mind. And to me this is a way of giving it that context, giving it the meaning, so that next time they go by the scene or they read something in the paper, it will be with a more open to I wonder what? Instead of having made up their mind already. Really find that those questioned it, "Gee, I wonder what else was going on then?" and sharing that with other people. Because people... Cop stuff is compelling. Just look at the culture from TV, it's all cop shows and people vicariously try to lead it. The top cop stuff, real stories, the highway patrol along with all the dramas. And if people get information about police work, they love to share it because it shows they know something about that culture. They're attuned to it. I find that when we invite people to training, when we invite people on ride alongs, they become—they go you and share that. They become our voices in that they'll say, "Well you know why they did that?" The paper will say the police did this and people will say, "Can you believe they did this?" and these people who have now got insight will say, "Yeah, but do you know why? Let me tell you the story about when I was riding with these guys one night." And they tell you they wet their pants because somebody's gone down in front of them. Or they explain that perspective. That's what I would like this to be for our audiences. That type of reshaping of their preconceived notions and seeing that there's something beneath that uniform that there's a set of eyes behind the Ray Ban's and there's a heart beneath the badge. That's really the, I think the crux, that I'd like to convey.

Cocke: How do you kind of account, in your own mind, for what appears to be a paradox that you just named which is there is all this kind of popular interest in cops and police shows, police movies and with all of this sort of popular expression of it, there's so little reality in it, is what I'm hearing. It seems to be that paradox that there's all this stuff about it but there's very little reality. Am I hearing that right from you?

Wilson: Yeah, I think it's because of the way it's glamorized. The docu-dramas are good because it's—there's an adage that police work is 95 percent boredom and 5 percent pure adrenaline. And what people get vicariously is that 5 percent pure adrenaline. They're not writing the police report or they're not sitting on a surveillance crossing their legs for four hours because they can't get out of the car. The mundane, repetitive, boring stuff doesn't make for good copy or good entertainment. So the other paradox is they are kind of getting what they're in it for. Most police officers are adrenaline junkies. They live off of that—your stress, that upper level stress that is not stressful in causing anxiety but stressful in pushing that adrenaline out and that epinephrine and your senses are—your sense of alertness is always peaked and it's a constant vigilance. And that's where in the most routine traffic stop, you don't know who's in that car. It could be a soccer mom or it could be the girlfriend of some guy that's stuck down in the back, some fugitive, or she could have a load of dope that she doesn't want found and she's not going back to Joe or Bubba. So there's always that vigilance. That crisis, the heightened sense of awareness and then it comes down a little bit. So even though there's that 5 percent of real action and 95 percent—have those ebbs and flows of—this could be something and then you come down. Police are unique in that perspective and police families suffer because of that. Because you're always up at that higher end of sensory awareness and there's that—you know for every action there's an equal and opposite reaction, so you're going to come down farther than the average person. So the average person's stress level is within a variance and they've got those bands of oops, something went wrong today, or this or that. But we've got these heights and even at our most routine, our stress level is higher than those average bands because of that vigilance. I think that's the vicariousness that the average person likes to see when they watch the cop shows. Their stress levels are going up sympathetically. And then I say the families get affected because the cop

comes home from work and he's just spent all day making decisions and living on the— is this dangerous, is it not? So they come home and they plop in the chair and it's like "So what do you want to do tonight?" "Why don't you decide that I'm just trying to chill out." And, "How was your day?" You want to zone out, you just want to come down off of that and not go back through it. You know we're kind of going off the track here a little bit but that's—

Cocke: What do you see as sort of the biggest—kind of the first set of initial barriers that you've got to kind of jump over here to get this rolling. I mean what's—let's talk about the idea of police telling their own story on the stage. I think you've said some about it already.

Wilson: I think the first thing is to share a story. Getting them to recognize that people are going to listen. And that's the kind of sell I've done on that so far is that this isn't a captive audience. People who show up for American Festival projects generally have an open mind or they're not going to be there. So you've got people that may—they have preconceived notions about us but they're willing to kind of look them over and say, "Okay, prove me wrong." Or, "How can you convince me?" But they're willing to be convinced. I think that's the first barrier is one, let them know that the audience is open. The second is to decide that this is our story, through our eyes and through our words, and so rarely is that occurring. Usually it's the media taking a sound bite or taking it out of context. Any officer who's talked with the media has had that experience. You talk for a half-hour and you think you've given them a pretty good perspective of what happened and then the sound bite is going to just be used to advance what other agenda they already had.

Cocke: Even theatre folk have that experience.

Wilson: The other is the abstract nature of it. Most police officers don't think in those abstract terms. It's very black and white. It's law enforcement; you broke the law or you didn't. This is—you can't put your hands on this thing. So I think right now the

challenge—I think I've got the seeds sown of what it is and how it can be helpful. Right now the challenge is to get their stories and to get them comfortable—the abstraction of how it's going to be presented and to get them comfortable with them presenting it. Because the first question, like you said is, "So who's going to tell this story for them?"

Cocke: Well, there's one good side of that. We're not going to trust anybody else to tell the story. We've already known they'll get it wrong. Well, that's it. Is there anything else, you want to...? If you could send me a picture, that'd be great. I'll let you know—whatever.