

## #23 (MO MCGOUGH)

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### Jerry Ratcliffe:

Jerry Ratcliffe again with Reducing Crime, a podcast featuring influential thinkers in the police service and leading crime and policing researchers. Mo McGough is chief of staff of The Policing Project at NYU Law. We chat about the role, representation and experiences of women in policing. Find out more in this episode at [reducingcrime.com](http://reducingcrime.com) and on Twitter at [@\\_reducingcrime](https://twitter.com/_reducingcrime). Maureen McGough recently joined The Policing Project at NYU Law as chief of staff. She previously served as Director of National Initiatives for the National Police Foundation following 10 years of federal service at the US Department of Justice and US Department of State. A senior policy advisor at the National Institute of Justice, Mo oversaw agency efforts to advance evidence-based policing, implement criminal justice reform and improve the representation and experiences of women in policing. Mo also served as counsel on terrorism prevention in the Office of the Deputy Attorney General, Special Assistant US Attorney for the District of Columbia and Coordinator for federal AIDS relief efforts in Rwanda.

She is a member of the FBI's Law Enforcement Education and Training Council and executive board member for the American Society of Evidence-based Policing and a recent public leadership executive fellow with the Brookings Institute. Mo is an attorney and earned her J.D. from the George Washington University Law School. On a rare nice winter's day, we caught up in a public park in Washington, DC. Among her many accomplishments, by the way, Moe is also a yoga instructor, the topic we are talking about as I hit the record button. She also brought vodka from Florida so we were off to a good start.

### Mo McGough:

...doesn't matter how flexible you are and all that shit because I'll do it.

### Jerry Ratcliffe:

Oh, don't come up with that airy fairy bullshit. Yeah, I am... Don't get me wrong. I love going to yoga and I think it helps a little bit, but honestly I have the flexibility of a dead Oak tree.

### Mo McGough:

That's why you should go to yoga, Jerry.

### Jerry Ratcliffe:

Yes, but it doesn't get any better. I just sit cross-legged on the floor and then just gently roll over backwards like a reverse weeble.

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**Mo McGough:**

Oh God, I love that mental image so much.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And I do it with a smile. I'm in a very good place. I end up in happy baby and not in a good way.

**Mo McGough:**

Cheers.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Banyan Reserve vodka.

**Mo McGough:**

You're welcome. It is all my dad drinks and he gives it to me in stocking stuffers for Christmas. So it's all I had in my cupboard that was portable in my purse.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

The vodka.

**Mo McGough:**

Desperate times, my friend.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Cheers.

**Mo McGough:**

Cheers.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Yeah. So-

**Speaker 3:**

I want my pants off.

**Speaker 4:**

Yes.

**Mo McGough:**

I hope your microphone picked that up.

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**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Well, the fact that there's a small child wanting to take his pants off.

**Mo McGough:**

And shirt.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Yeah.

**Mo McGough:**

Full nude.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Yeah.

**Mo McGough:**

That's what we get for recording in a park.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Please don't do it, child. Please don't.

**Mo McGough:**

Oh. Nope. They came off. Welcome to DC, Jerry. It's lovely this time of year.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Oh, the first nice day of winter and...

**Mo McGough:**

Let that be a lesson to all of us.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Oh, deary me. Well, thank you for coming to see me. How did you get into policing?

**Mo McGough:**

So I wish I could say it was a conscious decision. It's something I've always been interested in. My dad was a cop for 30 years and-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Where?

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**Mo McGough:**

St. Petersburg, Florida.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Oh, lovely.

**Mo McGough:**

Yeah. He-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

That's a nice town.

**Mo McGough:**

It is lovely. It wasn't lovely when I was growing up. It was kind of small, a little bit dumpy, but it's really taken off.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I'm starting to appreciate their vodka a little bit more.

**Mo McGough:**

Oh yeah? You're welcome.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Thank you.

**Mo McGough:**

I know you don't currently accept sponsorships, but if Banyan Reserve would like to throw you some cash. I think you've earned it. When I got to the National Institute of Justice, I started dabbling in some of the police work and I realized I've always been drawn to social justice and human rights issues. There really is no better way to effect that kind of change at a country level than to work with the police. They're doing some of the best work in the area. They've got the most room to grow in the area. I was lucky in the sense that from the very beginning, when I started working on policing issues, I was always working with really progressive law enforcement officers.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So why is this lost on so many people that think the best way to move policing forward is to attack from the outside? And regardless of things like consent decrees and other kinds of blue ribbon commissions, because that's the best kind of commission. If there's no blue ribbon, it's just not a commission.

**Mo McGough:**

Right.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

In the end, these things roll back.

**Mo McGough:**

It absolutely is, but I think the difference is you look at the research about what matters and it's true. So a consent decree comes into a jurisdiction and they start measuring the impact they want to make. They're able to show through the consent decree that they made that impact. And then they leave and of course everything goes back to the way that it was. But because we're not comprehensively measuring the progress that we're making on these small levels that you and I know about, these really progressive people who are making a difference on the ground, we're not measuring it. It's not part of something big. It's not getting the attention. So it's really tied to the people.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Right. We change the forms and the paperwork but we don't change the culture.

**Mo McGough:**

Absolutely. I mean, you've seen it. A lot of the people that we respect the hell out of, it's professional suicide to do the work that they do the way that they do it.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Isn't that amazing, isn't it?

**Mo McGough:**

It really is.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

We all agree we don't like doing it this way, yes. But if we do it your way, we're going to crucify you for it.

**Mo McGough:**

Absolutely.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Yeah.

**Mo McGough:**

Yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So the women in policing side has become hugely important because I'm really getting a sense that the United States is starting to lag the rest of the world.

**Mo McGough:**

Not starting to. We always have.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Oh, that's good. There we go. This is a good news story.

**Mo McGough:**

Don't give us too much credit. Women as sworn officers in US policing have been 12 to 13%. That number has been the same for decades despite some really concerted recruitment efforts and awareness campaigns. And while we've been hovering at 12 to 13%, a lot of the rest of the developed world is outpacing us significantly. So Norway is almost at 50% in their sworn right now. The New Zealand police force is on track to have 50% of women recruits by 2021.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Oh, that's fabulous.

**Mo McGough:**

It's incredible. And not only are we not moving, we don't even understand why we're not moving.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

It is amazing that people seem okay with it being this low because the job of policing has changed significantly in the last 30 years. It's less about crime. I mean, you go around the country as do I, and it's increasingly less about crime and it's a social service now. It's about mental health and it's about domestic violence and it's about dealing with people's social problems first and foremost. Crime is almost this ancillary job and yet we're still locked in this, "It's a gung ho, I'm a crime fighter," kind of mentality.

**Mo McGough:**

Absolutely. And we're recruiting for that, even though we know that the job has changed or that maybe the job hasn't even changed that much. Maybe we just understand the job a little bit better in the day to day of what's required of our officers. It's about building community resilience, but we're still hiring the way that we used to. We're still assessing the way that we used to. We're still training the way that we used to. So of course, we're losing all these really qualified candidates, not just about women. It's about, we're not getting the right people for the job.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So where are the avenues where we need to start addressing this and making progress?

**Mo McGough:**

How much time do you have?

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

For everybody listening at home or driving in your car, please don't operate heavy machinery. This could be a monologue. I opened up the floodgates. Okay. Let's start in a different place then. Is it that people don't understand the case or they just haven't figured out how to solve the problem? Do people not appreciate that this is actually an issue?

**Mo McGough:**

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It's all of those things. It's really interesting. There's actually research out there that says your average US citizen overestimates the representation of women in policing because they go by what they see on TV, and TV and the movies you've always got at least a few women in sworn positions kicking ass.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Well, there's Cagney and Lacey so we've got it covered, right?

**Mo McGough:**

Right.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Problem solved.

**Mo McGough:**

Problem solved. Move on to the next social issue.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

For everybody under the age of 40, Cagney & Lacey was a cop show with women in it. Showing my age. Again.

**Mo McGough:**

Oh man. Again. Yeah. And the other thing is too, I think there's still a fundamental misunderstanding about what the law enforcement profession is in the general public.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

That's the worrying part.

**Mo McGough:**

Yeah. Part of it is they think there's more women on the job already. And then the other part of it is they don't really understand what cops do. And that's problematic for a lot of reasons because it's also a missed opportunity for them to raise the bar in terms of what they expect from their public servants. We did this National Summit on Women and Policing research in 2019 when I was at the DOJ. We did a really deep dive into a lot of these issues and when you look at things like recruitment and the content of recruitment in the US, it is so different than the way the job is described in a place like New Zealand, for example. Just anecdotally speaking, we were talking about some recruitment efforts at a small agency in the South. I won't give them up by name. They were showing a commercial to try and get more recruits in the door of a big burly man with a large gun strapped to his chest hanging out of a helicopter. And this is a tiny agency that doesn't even have a UIS.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I mean, you say that. I can't tell you as a cop in the East End of London though, the number of times I've hung upside down from a helicopter. It got old after a while.

**Mo McGough:**

Oh God, I can only imagine.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So I'm not sure if I've been to the same agency, but I was doing a little bit of work down there and I was waiting to get into the center where I was helping out and I was watching the recruitment video and I'm staring at this thing going, "What the fuck am I watching? Is it 1971?" It's like a cross between Dallas, SWAT and John Wick. There's this hardcore thumping music with it, flying around in cars and kicking in doors and throwing smoke grenades. And there was one scene, one scene, with a woman. And she was kneeling down talking to kids and smiling.

**Mo McGough:**

Of course. Yes, of course.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

For an eighth of a second.

**Mo McGough:**

And you think about all of the problems that plague the police profession in this country, how many of them related to this super aggressive hyper-masculine culture that we perpetuate?

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

The two parts of that that really were astounding is firstly, it's a complete misrepresentation of what policing is. And secondly, it's a sidelining of the role, that women can't play these other roles but they are pigeonholed into this one role of, "Can you just look after their kids and those grieving women that I'm not very good at dealing with?" No, there's no end of women that can kick my ass.

**Mo McGough:**

Yes. So that gender reductionist thing-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

You and I know a whole bunch of them.

**Mo McGough:**

Sitting across from the table from one, yes.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Exactly. I go drinking with you mainly because I need your backup in a fight.

**Mo McGough:**

You're welcome. So that gender reductionist thing, I feel like that comes up so much when we talk about these issues. Because one, I'm really conscious of it because when we talk about the benefit of women officers, it can seem like we're being reductionist, right? So we say things like the importance of emotional intelligence on the job. And that's

not to say that there's not men officers out there who are extremely emotionally intelligent. And that's not to say that there are women officers out there who aren't extremely physically capable. But we do have to just acknowledge the certain attributes and outcomes associated with either gender. But the thing that's really frustrating about it is that even when you classify things as a very physical part of the job, people just automatically assume that women can't do it.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Right.

**Mo McGough:**

And that is just absolutely insane. It's interesting, so at this national summit that we held, one of the women officers got up and she told a story about how she was in a really high performing, high stress unit and they responded to a scene and there happened to be a kid in diapers. This woman did not have any children, had no interest in children, had never been around a baby. There were men officers on the scene who were fathers and they handed her this kid.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Right.

**Mo McGough:**

She could not believe it. But in that moment she saw just how far we have to go. Yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

It strikes me there's also a misunderstanding that each type of job requires a specific skill set. But when you go to a job, you never really know what's involved and you never know which skill set you're going to have to use and you're swapping those skill sets on a regular basis. I'm sure you've done a gazillion ride alongs. You can see officers having to change their mindsets as their understanding of what the particular incident they're dealing with chops and changes. We can't just say "This is your type of job. You can only go to those," and "This is your type of job. You can only do those." We need people who can do all of those things. I think the only thing I would push back on is I'm not entirely sure that men have got that much emotional intelligence to be [inaudible 00:12:06], but yeah.

**Mo McGough:**

I was just going to say, I think the key attribute of making sure you can make those shifts is emotional intelligence and we don't recruit for that and we don't test for that and we sure as shit don't train for it either.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Or reward it or respect it or think that it's an important part of the job. Do you know anything about how other countries have shifted that mindset within the job?

**Mo McGough:**

Yes. So I think this is a really important part. At that National Summit, we had representatives from New Zealand, Queensland and Ontario there, and they all have significantly higher representation of women than we do. They said it is absolutely not about recruitment. First, you have to change the culture and then you bring more women in the door.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Why would people come into the existing cultures?

**Mo McGough:**

Exactly. And that's, quite frankly, that's all we've done in the US. To the extent we've done it, which is even not that much, right? But we just focus on getting increased numbers. And then of course we lose the qualified candidates that we bring in because the culture doesn't support their success.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So, whereas we should be thinking about being 50/50, you're saying that nationally we're about 12%?

**Mo McGough:**

We're nationally about 12%. So I will say this. So I and others who are trying to promote this work actually are not yet advocating for 50/50 representation because we don't know enough about the interest of women in the US to be law enforcement officers. So what we're advocating for is that the meaningful opportunities for qualified women candidates to serve as sworn officers matches the propensity of women to take up those jobs. But one thing we are advocating for is a minimum of 30% representation and that's because of the theory of representative bureaucracy. Until you reach 30% in an organization, you actually can't change it for the benefit of that demographic. So you need at least 30% of women in the agency to help sustain any changes to support women in the agency in the future.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Oh, that's interesting. And that's from research.

**Mo McGough:**

Yes.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

From your scientists and your thinking people.

**Mo McGough:**

Perhaps you've heard of them. Yes.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Yes. Not very respected, not very well thought of but-

**Mo McGough:**

I didn't say it was your research. It's good researchers out there doing the work.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

All right. Proper scientists then.

**Mo McGough:**

Yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

People who know what the fuck they're talking about. Recruitment comes after we change the culture.

**Mo McGough:**

Yes.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

How do we start by changing the culture?

**Mo McGough:**

That's a great question. I feel like that's a podcast in and of itself. One of the things that I think is really important is naming the problem in the first place because law enforcement works for the people who built it. So I think you'll go to a lot of law enforcement agencies in the country who have a significant underrepresentation of women, and I don't think the people in power would see that necessarily as a problem as long as the agency is functioning the way they think it should be functioning.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Right. I mean, I've been to some agencies where there are 20, 30 police officers in the department. Not big departments. And there doesn't seem to be a single woman in sight, which is eerily reminiscent of my romantic life.

**Mo McGough:**

Also a different podcast.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Or there's, this sounds terrible, but there's a token woman.

**Mo McGough:**

It's not terrible. That is happening. Yeah. I mean, no, it's terrible that it's happening, but it's not terrible for you to say it.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Yeah. It's, "Oh, here's our department and we're great. And here's Brenda, our token woman. She deals with the kids."

**Mo McGough:**

Yep. Exactly.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And everything's fine.

**Mo McGough:**

Yep.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

How did that culture get there? How do we change that?

**Mo McGough:**

Well, so I mean, we've got to stop talking about policing like it's its own separate entity and it's not a microcosm of larger society, right? I mean, these are problems that are endemic in basically all public institutions. Some have been a lot better at rectifying them than others. We had a panel at IACP about women in policing and inevitably when you talk about this issue, it's almost exclusively women who show up to talk about it, which is interesting because they certainly didn't build the structures that are resulting in their oppression and under-representation, right?

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Right.

**Mo McGough:**

There were a few male chiefs there and I commend them for being there. But we asked a question at the end. "To the male chiefs in the audience, what is your perspective on this?" And this chief got up there and he was very authentic about it. He meant every word he said, and he was unapologetic about it. But he said, "In light of Me Too, I'm really weary of hiring women." So his solution was to protect men from being in a situation where they would harass women. That's how he saw creating some type of appropriate behavior in his force, is just get rid of the temptation to be a jerk to women.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Wow.

**Mo McGough:**

It was incredible. And you could just hear the air go out of the room a little bit, but it's those moments where you realize just how far we have to go.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Was the chief interrupted by a telegram arriving from 1890?

**Mo McGough:**

No, you know who he was interrupted by? Was Nikki Smith-Kea of the Arnold Foundation who has been huge in this movement and she has the kind of class and poise I aspire to one day because she just got on the microphone and very patiently and kindly explained to this person why that was not an appropriate response and if anything, he should be training his officers not to be jerks to women.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Of course that's the wrong audience. It really should be the city managers who hired the guy in the first place. Good grief.

**Mo McGough:**

Who also probably you're just not aware of this, right?

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Or think it's okay.

**Mo McGough:**

There's some research out there on policing culture and its impact on women. There's not a ton because it just hasn't been a priority issue for funders. But one of the things that they see is that if you ask a woman officer, "Have you been the victim of sexual harassment?" they will usually say, "No, absolutely not." But if you start to ask about specific behaviors that constitute sexual harassment that they live with every day, it's "Yes. All the time." "Does somebody make a sexually explicit comment about your body? Oh yeah, of course. But that's just Al." So it becomes so normalized in the culture that even, I think, the women who are living in it don't necessarily identify it because they're just surviving it and it shouldn't be their job to have to fix it.

It should be ours and it should be the men in power. I think that's one way you change the culture is that you start to name it. The second way is you reward the behaviors of people who are doing the good work. How often are you rewarding behaviors that women officers are just better than their male counterparts on? As is exhibited by research, women officers use less force than their male counterparts. They are less likely to escalate the use of force. They have better outcomes for, crime victims and crimes like intimate partner violence or domestic violence or rape.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

There's also a bit of research, they tend to be more imaginative in terms of problem solving.

**Mo McGough:**

Yes. Absolutely. Communities perceive them as more trustworthy. They're shown to better interact with and serve diverse communities. If there was a training out there, or if there was a policing strategy out there where the outcome you could promise departments was less use of force, fewer citizen complaints, better outcomes for crime victims, better interactions with diverse communities and your communities are going to trust you more, everybody would be implementing that training across the country.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

They would be except for the police [inaudible 00:18:25] be worried that they'd all be having affairs with all the married officers.

**Mo McGough:**

Yeah. That's why we need to maybe change the guard a little bit. I mean, that's a perfect example of why it's time.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I'm never going to get away with saying that, am I?

**Mo McGough:**

No, you absolutely are not.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I'm going to have to cut that out, aren't I?

**Mo McGough:**

Oh, 100%.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Oh yeah. But that's what they fucking worried about.

**Mo McGough:**

Yes. Yeah, absolutely.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I don't think it's even about setting up criteria for promotion and selection that reflect skill sets or requirements that women are necessarily even better at, but just reflect what the job actually requires and needs on a day to day basis. At that point it should be a level playing field.

**Mo McGough:**

I 100% agree and that's such an important point to make. It's interesting. It's so easy to slip into these conversations, particularly if you're speaking with somebody who doesn't necessarily agree about the importance of the issue, for them to accuse you of, say, lowering the standards, right? All that we're advocating for is an accurate change in the standards to actually reflect what the profession could and should be. We know from what research is out there and we are very confident that when you do that, you will have more women in your force. That's what's happening all over the world. Another area where this comes up a lot is around the physical fitness assessments. In some states they are disproportionately washing out the number of women candidates they have. We are advocating for changes in physical fitness assessments, but not to lower the standards, to more accurately reflect the physical requirements of the job because that's what the constitution requires, right?

If you have a random test and you were losing more women and not able to hire women because of a random test that you can't prove is necessary for the job, that's discrimination. You're starting to see it crop up all over the country as people starting to pay attention to the issue. One of the things that you see is that current physical fitness assessments that haven't changed in decades. There's an overemphasis on upper body strength, less of an emphasis on lower body strength. Traditionally males are proportionally stronger in upper body, females proportionally stronger in lower body. So when you have assessments that are geared toward upper body strength, that's the outcome you're going to get.

If there was a physical fitness test out there that was actually mapped to the physical requirements of what it takes to be a police officer and it turns out in that instance, women were not passing at higher rates, we would be okay

with that. Because it's about what's actually required for the job. The other thing is, people make a really big deal about this physical fitness assessment but in so many agencies, you do it once to get in the door and you never do it again.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Oh my goodness. If this is an important thing, why we're not doing repeated physical fitness requirements throughout the first 15, 20 years of people's service?

**Mo McGough:**

Yes. Yes.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And secondly, I don't know many foot chases that I've ever heard about anywhere that have lasted three miles. Why are we testing people on three mile and two mile runs?

**Mo McGough:**

Yes. Yes.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Holy shit. Suspect's two miles and I still haven't caught him. Good for him. He's getting away on this one. You know what I mean?

**Mo McGough:**

That came up at the National Summit. Captain Ivonne Roman from Newark police department who is a national leader in this work. She stood up and said, "I've arrested thousands of people in my career and I've never once dropped and given him 50 before I put cuffs on him." And then she made the great point. "I've chased a lot of people, but if I'm chasing somebody for a mile, I'm doing it wrong. Where's your cruiser and where's your backup?"

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Yeah. That's right.

**Mo McGough:**

It really is that simple when you think about it that way.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

But that also goes straight into the whole idea of training, right? I just remember all the assault course training that I did for no reason that I can really understand. But you know what? If a suspect ever ran away from me, he'd be fine right up to the moment when he ran through a kid's playground. And then he's screwed at that point because if he's on the monkey bars or he over a swing, I've got him. And if I've got a police dog, he's fine until he goes and tries to get away through a tunnel and a ring of fire because they're trained for that shit.

**Mo McGough:**

Oh, it's just absurd. Oh my God. One point I wanted to make about culture before I forget. So another way that we can really look at changing the culture to support women is acknowledge that there are health-specific needs of women officers that we need to address. When you look at other countries that have achieved parity or close to parity, they've addressed those head-on. One of the things that's really important to address is parental leave and job sharing and the difficulty of shift work on parents. And this doesn't need to just support women officers but the reality is where we are as a society today, a lot of the childcare still does fall to women.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Yeah. That's having to adapt to the reality of what's taking place outside of policing.

**Mo McGough:**

Absolutely. Yes.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Because you can choose to ignore it, but once you step outside of whatever situation you're in in policing, you're back in that other world which is still where things are disproportionately weighted in terms of child rearing and child care on the women in our society. So if you don't reflect that, why the hell would people want to join your job?

**Mo McGough:**

Absolutely. The reality is, and I think this is part of why some of us are fighting so hard, is that policing is comparatively a really good job. It's job security. It's difficult as hell, don't get me wrong, but how many jobs do you find with a pension?

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

No, I mean, it's not the pension. I just miss it. I'm lucky enough to still be around it in some fashion. But yeah, I really do miss it.

**Mo McGough:**

The first research that came out around women officers and use of force was really groundbreaking because the assumption up to that point was that women officers would escalate situations more quickly because they would lack physical strength and they would go to more lethal means. What that initial research showed was that because women traditionally exhibited more emotional intelligence, because they were more prone to deescalate the situation, they barely ever used force because they didn't need.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Right.

**Mo McGough:**

So when you talk about this public health, mental health aspects of police interventions, it's absolutely critical.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And when dinosaurs complain about women not being possibly stronger when it goes to going hands-on, they completely miss the point is, actually you don't go hands-on so often.

**Mo McGough:**

Yes. There's actually research out there that shows that if there's a woman on the scene, male officers are less likely to go hands-on. It takes the sting out of that hyper-masculine response to go toe to toe with somebody.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And that's interesting how we can be affected by the other offices around us. There are no ends of anecdotal incidences where you can see that taking place. I mean, I still remember going to a fairly large incident with quite a few people fighting and one of the people on my shift, lovely woman called Rowena, shout out to Rowena from the East End of London, long retired I'm sure.

**Mo McGough:**

Hey, Rowena.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

100 pounds soaking wet. It was a bar full of people fighting and she stands there and said, "Stop it, all of you! That's disgraceful!" Absolutely non-threatening physically, but just tapped into something with them. 30 guys fighting in a bar like, "Yeah. All right. We're sorry."

**Mo McGough:**

Sorry, Rowena.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

"Sorry."

**Mo McGough:**

I love it.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Not bringing additional testosterone to the fight, but bringing some other characteristic that can tap into people going, "Actually, maybe we should calm the fuck down."

**Mo McGough:**

Yeah. Absolutely. One of the things that we touched on a little bit, but I think is important to go into just a little bit more is the role of men in women in policing. So we've got 12% of women on the force. 4% of women in leadership positions. If we do want to see any type of organic, sustainable institutional and cultural change, there have to be men officers who are willing to take up that mantle and realize that it's critical. And it's not just about gender parity, it's about public safety for all the reasons that we've talked about why it's beneficial to have women on your force. I mentioned Captain Ivonne Roman and what she's doing in Newark. So she basically started a Women's Leadership Academy to help train women recruits to pass all of the assessments that currently exist. She's doing incredible work out there. But there's also a captain from Iowa State Patrol, captain Ken Clary. I'm sure you've run into him before. He's a LEADS scholar, fantastic leader. State Patrol's have even a significantly fewer representation of women than the national average.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Yeah. But they look really smart.

**Mo McGough:**

What he did is he brought Captain Roman out there and he built his own program for the Iowa State Patrol. He looked at me and he said, "We've got to do something about the toxic masculinity that is endemic in the police culture." And I'm looking at this man who has no reason to take up this issue, right? But who just knows it's the right thing to do. And it gave me so much hope, right? So for every chief there is at IACP saying, "I don't want to hire women because of Me Too," there's Captain Ken Clary out there.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

You mentioned IACP because that's really interesting, because that tends to be dominated by smaller police departments. My sense is that I feel like there's more progress being made in the bigger departments, the major city chiefs. Philadelphia, I think is at 25, 26% women, has just hired its first confirmed female police commissioner. I just see more progress being made, it's being much more normalized in the larger departments. Am I reading that right?

**Mo McGough:**

You are absolutely reading that right. Same is true with minority representation. Your larger, more urban areas are doing a better job. Some of it is a reflection of the population they serve. Some of that is a reflection of size. Some of that is a reflection of moving away from traditional culture at a faster rate. I think what you're seeing is basically law enforcement agencies around the country are a reflection of the community they serve.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I can't believe that cities aren't getting more into this just on the grounds of the fact it saves the department money.

**Mo McGough:**

Yes. Fewer citizen complaints. What's more compelling than that?

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

You will have fewer assault complaints. You will have a smaller IA department. You will have fewer lawsuits.

**Mo McGough:**

I am conscious of the fact that the research that's out there that says that is limited, but it's more than we have in the inverse. So it can't just be about equal access for women because we can see in American society that doesn't always get us very far. The reality is this is also a public safety crisis and more women on the force, we strongly believe based on the research that are out there, will improve public safety in America. And that's the goal we have to take. We have to prioritize that if we actually want to make a difference.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

These moves, while this seems a really late development considering it's 2020, these moves in terms of thinking about moving women in policing forward seem to be reflecting a grudging acceptance of moving police departments towards greater representation generally. We've seen movements in terms of race, but mainly I think the larger departments.

And now there's a realization, if not yet any movement in terms of thinking about women, these things are starting to seem more connected.

**Mo McGough:**

One thing that I have to remind myself of is that even though it feels begrudging now, we've actually made an incredible amount of progress in a few decades. So Chief Penny Harrington was the first woman chief of a major Metro department. That was Portland and it happened in 1985. So I was actually born into a world where there had not yet been a woman police chief.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I was a police officer in a world where there hadn't been a woman police chief.

**Mo McGough:**

I mean, that puts you back on your heels for a second, right? We have-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

It's just a reflection that I'm old. Thanks for that.

**Mo McGough:**

I didn't want to say it.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Thank you.

**Mo McGough:**

But no, I mean, I look at how far we have to go and I get really daunted, but you look at how far we've come in just a few decades and it actually gives you a lot of reason for hope. You're well aware of the research out there that says departments are seen as more legitimate when they accurately reflect the demographics of the jurisdiction that they're serving. One of the things that we're really conscious of in talking about women in policing is acknowledging that women are not a homogenous group and there are a lot of intersections with other issues that we need to be aware of. And I will tell you that was not on my radar. We need to be conscious of the fact that the experience of a white woman in a department is different than the experience of a black or brown woman in a department.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I've seen some departments where I've been very impressed by their shifts where there's been a lot of acceptance of gay and lesbian police officers in the shift. And I'm giving credit where it shouldn't be because that's just how it should be. But we are where we are, right? It reminds me when I was in the military of research about what happens, especially in wars with squads and all the squads care about is, are you good at your job? When the shit hits the fan, nobody cares about anything else. Do you do a good job? And that's really what matters.

**Mo McGough:**

That's really what matters. But I think there's a couple of caveats to that. And one is what happens when the shit isn't hitting the fan. So if you are, for example, if you're a woman on a force and you're subject to what you don't necessarily consider as sexual harassment, but it's not behavior that makes you feel safe and that person's backing you up. So sure in the moment, maybe when the shit hits the fan, they show up for you and you show up for them, but you don't feel as safe as your counterpart and that's problematic. And then the other time where I think it does start to make a difference, at least from what we've seen, is when it comes time to promotion. So you're out of the foxhole. You're all up for the same gigs and you have to prove yourself 10 times more and prove that it's not just because of some demographic box that you tick.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And it still remains unfair. We know people in the evidence-based policing world who have suffered terribly and it's had drastic career impacts on them simply because their face didn't fit.

**Mo McGough:**

Yep. Absolutely.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

There is a supervision issue here as well because I see the constantly changing norms and attitudes of my students who are reflective of an age group who are joining policing, but what you see in leadership roles is people who are 20 years behind them. And so you've got people with these very old school traditional, if it ain't broke don't fix it attitudes who fail to see that it's broken. And then you have a whole cohort of young people coming into policing in their twenties who grew up in an entirely different world and approach all these issues of intersectionality and race and gender and religion and ethnicity as an entirely different perspective. And they're being supervised by these Neanderthals, from their perspective, who don't understand what that is. And that puts a significant challenge on modern supervision in policing.

**Mo McGough:**

That is an excellent point. It's interesting because the people in those positions who maybe have a more traditional view of the profession, oftentimes get to ascribe what's important for promotion. So there's a tendency to hire people who fit the mold that you created. And I think one of the biggest problems that we would face in advancing women in policing is the concept of command presence. People getting washed out of promotional opportunities because they lack command presence, whatever the hell that means.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

There's a quote from David Phillips, who was a police chief in Kent in the UK, who's saying, "Commanders can be tactically strong and strategically weak." And it makes me think about that quote when you talk about command presence, because there are so little times when that is necessary. There are so many more times what you need is common sense, smarts and a different skill set because there [inaudible 00:32:43] majority of leadership roles are spent around a table. They're not outside when you're taking fire.

**Mo McGough:**

Absolutely.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

In fact, most police departments, most leaders will never be in a situation where they're having to lead in that environment.

**Mo McGough:**

Absolutely.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

However much they have the John Wick fantasy. We've all had the John Wick fantasy, right?

**Mo McGough:**

Do you have an option to show pictures with your podcast? Is there just going to be a big picture of him?

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

People are going to wonder what you look like. Then they come to the podcast website, just going to put a picture of me and Keanu Reeves.

**Mo McGough:**

I'm here for it. I'll sign off on it.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I think we've covered everything.

**Mo McGough:**

Cool. I'm about out of vodka, so let's call it.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

As ever, a pleasure. Thank you, Mo.

**Mo McGough:**

Thank you.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

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